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www.blackdownsupport.org.uk

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www.makingitlocal.org

# Reverend Reed steps into shoes of cadet 'padre'

By LUCIE SIMIC

blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk

## ARMY Cadets in the Blackdown Hills area now have their own Padre.

Reverend Steven Reed has concluded his induction training and is working closely with A Company which covers east and mid-Devon, and Devon Army Cadets as a whole.

Mr Reed said: "This is a great opportunity for me to serve local teenagers in an excellent organisation which has some very gifted and committed adult instructors."

Company commander Major Mervyn McColm said: "We are very pleased that Steven is able to work alongside our team. His talks on character, faith and Army core values have been well received by the cadets."

"He also lends our members a friendly and confidential pastoral ear."

Steven is in full-time ministry at Hemyock Baptist Church. He served for nine years with the Army Intelligence Corps following which he was a senior manager in industry.



◆ NEW padre Reverend Steven Reed

# Geoffrey is honoured

By BEN MIDDLETON

ben@tindlenews.co.uk

## A LUPPITT resident has been honoured in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Geoffrey Dicks has been recognised for his services to Macroeconomics with an MBE.

Macroeconomics is a branch of economics dealing with the performance, structure, behaviour and decision making of the entire economy.

Mr Dicks has been working with the coalition government for just over a year in the department for budget responsibility and it was this role that earned him recognition.

Speaking to Pulman's View Mr Dicks, who travels from Honiton to London each week to continue his work, said: "I received a letter in the post about six weeks ago telling me that I was going to receive the MBE."

"I imagine everyone gets the same standard letter and it was very formal

wording."

The economist says he is really looking forward to attending a ceremony at Buckingham Palace and receiving his MBE.

He said: "You get the invite and it tells you that the ceremony will take place sometime between now and the end of the year."

"Obviously I am really looking forward to attending the ceremony. You can turn these things down but the fact that I didn't shows that I am up for it."

## WORKING OUR WOODLANDS

Blackdown and East Devon  
Woodland Association with  
John Greenshields

**I AM sitting here with the rain pouring down, this will do the trees and my spuds the world of good!**

I have just finished reading a survey which highlighted the reluctance of land and woodland owners to take up government grants like the Forestry Commission's (FC) English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS).

While I respect all owners to their right to do as they please, I feel it is a missed opportunity for the funding which would enable woodland owners to afford to manage their woodlands.

Nobody will ever get rich in this country from woodland, but if the grant aid is out there then why not use it? Someone else will.

Is it the red tape, the forms, the FC personnel, the worry of having government officers in your woods, or something else? You tell me.

I am currently going through the process of extending my EWGS 10-year funding, and while an odious task, and it does take some time, but it surely is worth it, well I think it is!

There have been a lot of discussions in the media lately about some of the larger forests being smothered by non-native species, but these trees have a short life span and far less are being planted once the older trees are harvested. Anyway, we import far too much timber, in my opinion, should be grown here.

We should be planting 10 times the amount of trees than we are at present. It's all very well the toilet paper manufacturer saying they plant three for every one cut down but they should be planting 10.

On a lighter note, I hope to have seen you at the wood fair as it will have passed before this issue is printed but I hope it was a success.

Newly-formed charity the Blackdown Hills Trust now has its website at [www.theblackdownhillstrust.org.uk](http://www.theblackdownhillstrust.org.uk) and is actively looking for projects within the hills to support.

This trust is the legacy from the Local Stakeholders Group of the Neroche Scheme, and has strong ties to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty as well.

Email: [parkfarm@tinyonline.co.uk](mailto:parkfarm@tinyonline.co.uk)

Contact the news team at [blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk](mailto:blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk)

## Your PULMAN'S VIEW team



EDITORIAL MANAGER  
KATE WILLIAMS  
kate@tindlenews.co.uk  
01297 631120



SUB-EDITOR  
LUCIE SIMIC  
lucie.simic@tindlenews.co.uk  
01297 631120



CHIEF REPORTER  
ANDERS LARSSON  
anders@tindlenews.co.uk  
01297 631120



REPORTER  
BEN MIDDLETON  
ben@tindlenews.co.uk  
01297 631120



ACCOUNTS ASSISTANT  
LUCY STEAD  
lucy.stead@tindlenews.co.uk  
01297 32078



ACCOUNTS MANAGER  
STEVE DOWNTON  
s.downton@tindlenews.co.uk  
01297 32078

## HOW TO CONTACT US

NEWSROOM . . . . .01297 631120

ACCOUNTS . . . . .01297 32078

Pulman's View, Tindle House, South Street,  
Axminster, Devon EX13 5AD  
Email: [pulmans@tindlenews.co.uk](mailto:pulmans@tindlenews.co.uk)

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DEPUTY AD MANAGER  
LOUISE NIDD  
louise@tindlenews.co.uk  
01297 32601



SALES EXECUTIVE  
ROSE SIWEK  
rose.siwek@tindlenews.co.uk  
01297 32637



SALES EXECUTIVE  
KELLY BAKER  
kelly@tindlenews.co.uk  
01297 32634



SALES EXECUTIVE  
JULIE HAMMOND  
julie@tindlenews.co.uk  
01297 32592

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**TAUNTON** Deane councillors and officers were recently invited to visit a secure hospital in Birmingham as an example of a proposed new development in the Blackdown Hills.

The visit, to a 128-bed facility providing a range of medium, enhanced low, locked, and low secure services similar to those suggested for the Wellington hospital, took place in May.

It was built in the residential area of Stinchley, south Birmingham, by Montpelier Estates, which has submitted a planning application for a 75-bed hospital at Chelston.

Montpelier director James McGarry said: "Because there is no comparable healthcare facility locally, we feel it is important that councillors have an opportunity to see one at first hand. They will be able to see the Birmingham facility's setting, with residential housing immediately across the road, and to talk with staff from the hospital and with local residents and ask any questions.

"I am sure councillors will find it an informative and eye-opening occasion and that they will learn a lot about the hospital's impact on community cohesion and people's quality of life, and how it affects other people's perceptions of the area, as well as house prices, jobs, and local small businesses within the community."

Meanwhile, it has emerged that a powerful lobby of national mental health charities has joined criticism of house builder Persimmon Homes for its recent stigmatisation of people with mental illness. Persimmon has threatened to withhold part of a £443,000 community facilities payment should the Chelston hospital receive planning permission, because the company is planning a nearby housing estate.

Although the new hospital would pump £20million into the local economy and provide 225 new jobs, Persimmon has complained that a hospital offering treatment and rehabilitation for people with mental illness and learning disabilities

# Controversy over hospital plans as officers pay visit

## MENTAL HEALTH PATIENT FEARS ARISE

would increase Wellington people's fears of crime, and consequently it would not pay all the money due.

Now, the heads of no fewer than four leading mental health charities have attacked the comments made by Persimmon.

Chief executive of Turning Point, a specialist in mental health services, Lord Victor Adebawale said it was depressing that a reputable company wanted to put cash before principles.

Lord Adebawale said: "It seems to me that this is an attempt by ignorant people to cash in by reducing their requirement under Section 106 — something in my experience which is very common when dealing with private developers who get properties built and then use Section 106 to negotiate out by using arguments like this.

"Turning Point has many services in residential areas, some in very desirable residential areas, with no complaints whatsoever.

"Being a free country, Persimmon can say what they like. However, I think an apology from Persimmon would be appropriate but I doubt you will get one.

Even naming on the floor of the House, would be unlikely to lead to the kind of people running Persimmon changing their views.

"One can only hope to ensure that Persimmon understand that their views will affect their desirability as a building partner with local authorities up and down the land and pursue in a way that affects their pockets."

Director of Time to Change, Britain's largest anti-stigma programme, Sue Baker said: "Misinformation about mental health issues — in particular the perception of the risk people with mental health problems pose to others — fuels the stigma that still plagues such a commonly experienced health issue.

"We have undertaken a lot of partnership campaigning with the Somerset PCT, mental health trust, and local mental health charities in order to improve public attitudes across Somerset.

"We are currently discussing plans to do more activity this summer and comments like these only serve to unpick these efforts."

The Centre for Mental Health deputy

chief executive Andy Bell said: "As a mental health charity with a particular interest in people's life chances in the criminal justice system, this is a matter of some concern. We are aware that negative local media campaigns about mental health facilities not only damage the planning of new services but contribute to overall experiences of stigma and discrimination.

"We would certainly support calls for the company to think again about the way they speak publicly about people with mental health problems."

Jane Harris, campaigns manager of Rethink, which helps people affected by severe mental illness to recover a better quality of life, said: "We agree that the hospital should not be seen as increasing fear of crime and are concerned by these comments."

Montpelier Estates is working closely with Wellington Chamber of Commerce to ensure as many jobs and business services contracts as possible go to local people. The firm has launched a pre-registration process on its dedicated website [www.thenewchelstonhospital.co.uk](http://www.thenewchelstonhospital.co.uk) for prospective suppliers and employees.

## Hospitalisation for woman after crash

**A WOMAN** was taken to the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital via air ambulance after the car she was driving crashed at the Cloverleaf junction on the A303 at Monkton, near Honiton.

The incident took place just after 3.30pm on Sunday, May 22nd, and two cars were involved — a blue Rover 45 and a blue Vauxhall Zafira.

Fire crews from Honiton, Ottery St Mary and Exeter attended the crash along with the police and ambulance personnel.

The woman driver of the Rover 45 is believed to be in her 60s and had to be cut out from her vehicle. She was then airlifted to hospital. According to the police report her injuries are not thought to be life threatening.

The road was closed for five hours and diversions where put in place.

## Free workshops for community funding

**DUNKESWELL** and Honiton will be the venues for free funding workshops to help businesses and communities looking for grants in the Blackdown Hills and East Devon Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The workshops will be run by Making it Local and grant advisors Kate Tobin and Julie Fergusson will be on hand to offer advice and answer questions.

The first workshop takes place in Dunkeswell Village Hall on Tuesday, June 7th, at 10am. East Devon Business Centre, Honiton, will be the venue for a workshop on Tuesday, June 14th, at 10am.

To book a place on the funding workshop call 01823 680626 or email [makingitlocal@devon.gov.uk](mailto:makingitlocal@devon.gov.uk).

## Play a part in a bat survey with experts

**LEARN** about bats and take part in an important bat survey with Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC) on Friday, July 29th. Help the experts survey the wide variety of bat species in the northern area of the AONB.

Please note this event involves some demanding walking in the dark.

The walk length will be around two hours. Places are limited so booking is essential. For more information contact SERC on 01823 664450 or email [info@somerc.com](mailto:info@somerc.com).

## VIEW FROM THE BLACKDOWN HILLS

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◆ **BUCKLAND** St Mary Primary School celebrated Green Britain Day recently. The children looked at their lunch boxes and investigated how they could reduce waste, recycle or reuse rubbish. They also had a litter pick around the school grounds. The final event to take place was writing a school pledge on how to become greener. Some of the pledges made were to ensure all lights were turned off when classrooms were not in use, to make sure computers and monitors were turned off, to recycle as much as possible, and to create more wildlife areas in the grounds

## £30m government grant allocated for broadband

**BROADBAND** users across the Blackdown Hills could soon benefit from faster speeds thanks to a government grant.

Devon and Somerset County Council's are set to receive a £30million share of £50million funding, which was allocated

on Thursday. It is hoped the improved broadband could create a potential £750million boost to the local economy and create 50,000 new jobs.

Will Mumford, Devon County Council cabinet member for economy and strategic planning, said: "Government funding,

along with our own resources will help us secure the private finance we need to begin a massive investment programme. It will create jobs, transform the competitiveness of local businesses and improve the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

"Super-fast broadband for rural businesses will give them a level playing field with our urban counterparts. This has been a huge team effort. We've got a lot more to do in terms of securing European funding and private sector investment, but this is the flying start we wanted."



# New Cabinet's agenda to increase halls' cash

## A RENAMED council committee could increase grant opportunities for village halls in the Blackdown Hills.

On the agenda is a proposal to increase the maximum grant and to remove match-funding criteria.

What used to trade as the Executive Board of East Devon District Council (EDDC) is now known as the Cabinet, and meets for the first time under the new name on Wednesday, June 15th.

An agenda report explained that EDDC has a pot of around £22,000 each year for village hall grants.

The scheme is administered by the Community Council of Devon (CCD), which provides match-funding.

The maximum grant that each village hall can apply for from EDDC is £3,000 and only halls and community centres in rural areas (not towns) can apply.

At the moment, the EDDC grant can only be used as match-funding for a grant from the Community Council of Devon (CCD).

This means that applicants must have been successful in applying to the CCD before EDDC considers making a grant.

As a result, EDDC's village hall grant

budget has not been fully used.

The report explained: "The funding set aside by elected members for village halls is not being fully utilised.

"£13,000 of £22,000 was unspent in 2010/2011.

"In the last funding round (December 2010) east Devon only had one successful hall.

"There are ways of better utilising the funding for 2011/2012 and for future years if the funding remains available.

"Currently funding sources for village halls are very limited and are due to

become even

more limited, and they are an important resource for our rural communities."

The proposals put before EDDC's Cabinet are:

\*To increase the maximum amount of grant from £3,000 to £5,000 for each village hall.

\*If the CCD run out of money to match-fund (which is likely) but there are projects in east Devon that have applied and been assessed as worthy, EDDC could exercise its discretion to fund them without match-funding from the CCD.

## Charity cookbook launched at show

A CHARITY cookbook to raise money for the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance was launched at the Royal Bath and West Show by rural insurance firm Cornish Mutual.

The Come Together, Eat Together cookbook featuring more than 30 favourite recipes from cooking enthusiasts, families and well-known local chefs from across the Westcountry went on sale on Wednesday, June 1st.

The book is priced at £5 and all proceeds go directly to the South West Air Ambulances. The book is also on-sale online at [www.eattogether.co.uk](http://www.eattogether.co.uk).

The cookbook is the end result of the Come Together, Eat Together campaign — launched by TV presenter Anthea Turner earlier this year following research that showed almost half of all families in Somerset no longer eat together at least once a day. The campaign is aimed at re-capturing enthusiasm for home cooking and enjoying eating together as a family.

Bill Sivewright, chief executive of the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance said: "We're absolutely delighted to be receiving the support of Cornish Mutual through the production and sale of this charity cookbook and the proceeds of the book will help to keep the region's Air Ambulances flying. We would like everyone to get behind the book and buy their own copy."

## Nine crimes in a month on rural beat

NINE offences were recorded on the Honiton rural beat during May.

Police attended two crimes in Awliscombe last month. On Friday, May 13th, a man broke into a shed to steal petrol. The man was located and arrested from drink driving and burglary.

In Broadhembury one offence was recorded. Sometime between Friday, May 27th, and Sunday, May 29th, damage was caused to equipment in the village play park.

Three batteries were stolen from a static caravan located in a field in Luppitt. Police were called to the Luppitt incident overnight on Saturday, May 21st.

Monkton was the scene of one offence in May. Overnight on Thursday, May 19th, a metal gate was stolen from a trailer parked in a field in the Monkton.

A commercial office in Upottery was broken into by three men on Sunday, May 15th. According to the police report nothing was stolen.

In Yarcombe two offences were recorded.

Overnight between Sunday, May 1st, and Monday, May 2nd, a car and a quad bike were stolen from a secure outbuilding in the village. The car was later recovered in Gloucester.

On Tuesday, May 3rd, an attempt was made to gain entry to an unoccupied house.

Residents in Comb Raleigh, Cotleigh, Dunkswell, Gittisham, Offwell, Payhembury, Plymtree and Sheldon had a crime free month.

Anyone with information about any of the crimes is asked to contact Honiton police.

A spokesman for Honiton police said: "Overall crime in rural Honiton for the month of May has decreased from 15 in 2010 to nine in 2011. If you have any information on any of the crimes please get in touch with Honiton police."

To contact Honiton police call 08452 777444. Alternatively contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.



◆ YOUNGSTERS at Awliscombe Primary School staged traditional May Day celebrations on Friday, May 20th. All the children and teachers at the primary school dressed in Victorian outfits as part of the celebrations. Oliver Paige was crowned as the May Day king and Melissa Jones was named May Day queen. Children at the primary school dance around the maypole during traditional May Day celebrations

# Community works together for festival

By BEN MIDDLETON  
[ben@tindlenews.co.uk](mailto:ben@tindlenews.co.uk)

ST Andrew's Church, Chardstock, will be the venue for a charity flower festival this month.

The event will take place from Friday, July 22nd, until Sunday, July 24th, and will raise funds for the church roof repairs.

The cost of staging the flower festival has already been met by the proceeds of last year's Arts and Crafts Exhibition.

Festival organiser Ann Gough said: "In

2003 we produced an event which gave a lot of people immense pleasure to put on. It was an outstanding success, drawing more than 1,500 visitors from all over Devon, Dorset and Somerset and beyond and we raised a lot of money to help keep our lovely church in good repair.

"We want this festival to be even better and even more enjoyable for all concerned."

Judith Abbott, team vicar for Chardstock, added: "It is wonderful when a whole community works together like

this to create an event in which so many can participate, even more can enjoy and which helps to preserve a spiritual and community space that is so obviously valued locally."

The theme of the festival will be All Things Bright and Beautiful and doors will open from 10.30am until 5.30pm each day.

Music and bell ringing will also take place and refreshments will be served.

Free parking is available. For more information contact 01460 220348 or 01460 220478.

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# A View from the Blackdowns



◆ THE stunning scene of balloons from the Tiverton Balloon Festival seen around the Blackborough area recently, sent in by reader Laurence Smith  
Do you have a photo of a View from the Blackdowns? Email it to [blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk](mailto:blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk)

## Partnership welcomes white paper on nature

By **ANDERS LARSSON**  
[anders@tindlenews.co.uk](mailto:anders@tindlenews.co.uk)

THE Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership has welcomed the publication of the government's white paper on the natural environment on June 7th.

The proposals offer new opportunities for wildlife and landscape conservation in the local area, while strengthening work which is already underway, according to staff.

The measures include funding for partnerships to work together to protect green spaces — an approach which has been successful across the UK's 46 AONBs, including the Blackdown Hills.

The white paper will integrate into government policy the true economic value of natural landscapes as carbon stores,

sources of clean water and places for recreation. It also aims to get more people involved in learning, exercising and volunteering outdoors.

Linda Bennett, Blackdown Hills AONB manager said: "I'm delighted that the government is backing the partnership approach to conservation which works so well here in the Blackdown Hills. I believe that we are very well placed to deliver many of the goals of the white paper locally, and we are looking forward to bringing these ideas to fruition on the ground."

The vital role of AONBs in achieving a healthy natural environment has been set out in Think Big, a joint statement of ambition from the UK's AONBs, national parks, RSPB and National Trust.

Think Big is available from the Blackdown Hills AONB's website at [www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk](http://www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk).

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## A View from the clubs

# Ladies enjoy hearing David's confessions

**PRESIDENT Gill Dennis** extended a warm welcome to everybody at the Smeatharpe WI meeting and introduced the evening's speaker, David Wilkes.

Mr Wilkes entertained all the ladies with his Confessions of a Chiropractor talk, engaging them with his gentle, humorous recollections of situations he had encountered as a chiropractor.

He went on to tell of some of his experiences as a line judge at the

Wimbledon Tennis Championships, where he was officiating over matches involving luminaries such as Pete Sampras, Bjorn Borg and the final time that Martina Navratilova won the ladies championship on Centre Court.

After Sally Milne had expressed the thanks of the WI for his highly entertaining talk, the meeting proceeded to the business part of the evening.

Pam Parry thanked all who helped at the cream tea, which proved a profitable start for this year's

designated charity.

Any members who had old photographs of people or events in the Blackdowns were asked to look them out as Michael Cooper would like to scan and upload photos into the Blackdown archives data base.

Geraldine Field won this month's competition of a figure made from pipe cleaners. Teresa Summerhayes had the winning Flower of the Month.

Next month's meeting is a Bangers and Mash Evening, rounded off with card games.

## WI woman awarded quilling bursary

**SMEATHARPE Women's Institute members and two visitors were warmly welcomed by Liz Tucker.**

She congratulated Gloria Dobinson on being awarded the Mary Holdsworth Craft Bursary, to attend a course on quilling.

Information was given about

forthcoming trips by Sally and Ann. Sue Little welcomed the guest speaker, Keith Gibbs.

The members were educated, entertained and mesmerised by a series of science experiments conducted by Mr Gibbs with the assistance of many of the ladies.

School science lessons were never

so much fun. Perhaps he needs to return to explain how an hour can pass so quickly.

Mr Gibbs then judged the month's competition — a bag made from something you would normally throw away.

First place went to Pernelle Rowe and Geraldine Field was second.

**Send your club news and reports to  
blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk**



◆ MEMBERS of Yarty Gardening Club are looking forward to some excellent garden outings this year

# Plantsman's paradise for visiting members

**THE Yarty Gardening Club, based in and around Bishopswood and Buckland St Mary, has some great garden visits on its programme this year.**

Elworthy Cottage Garden, near Taunton, and Springdale at Smeatharpe, are followed by Cothay Manor, Greenham, Wellington, on Thursday, June 16th.

Members and visitors should make their own way there, following the brown signs off the A38 Wellington-

Exeter road. Members should arrive at 2pm, entry to the garden is £7 and teas will be available.

The romance of Cothay lies in part in its great age, and the atmosphere that surrounds it. Legend has it that, to celebrate the end of the Wars of the Roses, a red and a white rose were planted on the terrace by Richard Bluett, the then lord of the manor, who enlarged Cothay in the 15th Century.

The legend continues as visitors can still see the red rose of Lancaster, and

the white rose of York, flowering today.

A dozen acres of magical gardens surround the manor. Many garden rooms, each a garden in itself, are set off a 200-yard yew walk.

In addition there is a bog garden with azaleas and drifts of primuli, fine trees, cottage garden, courtyards, and a river walk.

A plantsman's paradise. The gardens have achieved the highest accolade of two stars in the Good Garden Guide.

**bh ba Blackdown Hills Business Association**

## Stuart Williams will be missed by all at the BHBA but his legacy lives on ...

*by Val Baker*

We were so sorry to hear that Stuart Williams passed away last month. He had been a member and BHBA Board Directors for many years until he stood down in October 2007 due to poor health.

I was first introduced to Stuart in 2002, when I joined the BHBA as administrator. Stuart was in charge of publicity as a Director of the BHBA Board. What struck me most of all was Stuart's passion for work of the BHBA and the importance of the help it was giving to the smaller businesses in the area. As a skilled craftsman himself, Stuart knew how challenging it was to market yourself and Stuart was an incredible ambassador for the BHBA. An example of his support was demonstrated in November 2005, when Stuart steered a new membership drive in order to spread the word about the activities of the BHBA.

Our thoughts are with Annie and her family. We were so lucky to have to have him on the BHBA Board of Directors and without doubt it was his support that helped us to make the BHBA a stronger organisation and put it on a much firmer footing.



*Photo: Stuart Williams speaking at the King's Arms in Stockland in 2005*

Please contact Val Baker  
BHBA, St Ivel House, Station Road, Hemyock, Cullompton,  
Devon EX15 3SJ Tel 01823 681484

info@bhba.org.uk

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## COLYTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL



### OPEN DAYS FOR YEAR 7 ENTRY SEPTEMBER 2012

- Saturday 2 July 2011 – 10.00am
- Thursday 14 July 2011 – 10.30am
- Saturday 10 September 2011 - 10.00am
- Thursday 15 September 2011 – 10.30am

Each programme will commence at the time given above and is scheduled to finish at approximately 11.30am. The basic format will be the same for each Open Day comprising an introduction to the 11+ and a tour.

Applications for entry and further details are available from:

Colyton Grammar School, Colyford, Colyton EX24 6HN

Tel: 01297 552327

email: [admin@colytongrammar.devon.sch.uk](mailto:admin@colytongrammar.devon.sch.uk)





◆ FOR the first time in many years, the sun shone for Buckland St Mary School's May Fair. The schoolchildren opened the fair by performing a dance taught by dance teacher Kelly Leigh. The children also danced around the maypole which was followed by a performance from Ilton Trojan Twirlers. It was a great day for the whole community. An estimated £1,500 has been raised

## Police drink-drive crackdown begins

**POLICE have launched their annual summer crackdown on drink and drug-driving.**

The campaign is aimed at reducing the number of crashes on the regions roads where drink or drugs is a factor.

Throughout the campaign officers will be focussing on checking motorists and anyone involved in a collision during the summer will face a breath test.

Inspector Richard Pryce, force lead for Devon and Cornwall's road policing, said: "We know that time off work and enjoying the fine weather can lead to people having a drink and chancing the drive home. Please think ahead and do not risk putting your life or the lives of others at risk."

"As well as the potentially tragic consequences, someone who is caught drink driving faces losing their licence and subsequently their livelihoods along with the social stigma that a driving ban brings."

Officers are also warning motorists about the dangers of early morning drink driving and Inspector Pryce added: "The message to all motorists is very clear. Have fun, drink if you want too, but don't drive. If you do, you will be caught and face a life changing ban."

"Alcohol can remain in the system for a long time after you've had your last drink, something many of those who drive the morning after don't count on or realise. If anyone is working the morning after or driving early, please drink responsibly the day before and be aware of the perils of driving the morning after."

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# countrysceneextra

Written by countryside  
correspondent  
**TONY JACKSON**



# Bees are buzzing but no butterflies

**THE garden is buzzing with the sound of honey bees and bumble bees, eagerly seeking pollen in the flowering escalonia hedges and an extensive swathe of honeysuckle.**

However, butterflies still seem to be in short supply.

One evening last month, sitting in a high seat, I watched as seven roe does emerged from deep woodland to graze a recently cut hayfield. There was only one buck, a yearling, and this is typical for this time of the year. The older bucks tend to stay in cover, perhaps reviving their energies for the rut toward the end of July.

This year, however, I would not be surprised if the bucks broke out earlier than usual as a result of the warm weather. Four sika also joined the roe, one a young stag with a rich red dappled coat and carrying what will eventually be an impressive

head. A fox trotted across the field as the light faded, and a badger emerged from the tree-line to sniffle and grub for worms or grubs amongst the swathes of freshly mown grass. A pleasantly absorbing evening.

■ When did you last see a stag beetle? Now a globally endangered species and protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*) is Britain's largest beetle, with males growing up to 7.5cm in length, while the females are considerably shorter and lack the "antlers" which are, in fact, the male beetle's mandibles.

I can recall, as a child brought up in Wimbledon, coming across stag beetles as a matter of course every summer.

Often they would be found dead on the road or pavement, having been struck by vehicles. Now these magnificent creatures are rare and only usually found in a few isolated

areas.

The beetle has been in decline since the 1940s, largely as a result of destruction of dead wood habitats. The larvae feed on rotting deciduous wood over a period of around three years, before pupating eventually to emerge in beetle form.

However, one of the hot spots for stag beetles is Bournemouth and an unusual number of sightings have been reported from the area this year.

One witness saw at least a dozen flying over his garden one warm, windless evening. Although the males look formidable with their long antlers they are harmless, although the female can inflict a painful bite.

You can assist these magnificent creatures by leaving some old rotting wood in a corner of the garden, a spot where larvae could develop.

Meanwhile, if any reader sees or

comes across a stag beetle I would be very pleased to hear from them.

West Bay certainly seems to be featuring in the news these days. A few days ago Titanic 11, a newly acquired fisherman's boat, sank in the harbour and photographs showing the unfortunate owner clinging to his upturned boat were widely featured in the press. Not a good name for a boat.

However, on a more cheerful note Dorset Wildlife Trust has released some pictures of an otter photographed in broad daylight on the shoreline in West Bay.

The lucky photographer, Jeremy Jeffery, was on a visit from Kent when he snapped the remarkable images. Otters, having been nearly wiped out by pesticides in the 1970s, have now returned to many parts of the country.

The west of England has seen a welcome return on many river systems as a result of a ban on the

offending pesticides and in both Dorset and Devon there is clear evidence of an expanding otter population, through sightings, spraints (droppings) and, sadly, road deaths. Daylight sightings are increasingly common, as witness the West Bay otter.

In order for the expansion to continue it is essential that river systems are maintained in a healthy state.

However, many are being choked by the invasive Himalayan balsam, the wretched plant which overwhelms native vegetation. Now is the time to destroy the growing plants and as they are easily uprooted, areas can readily be cleared by volunteer teams.

It is not only river courses which suffer from this weed, but also inland hedgerows.

Here, for the past two weeks I have been tearing up hundreds of plants growing along a hedgerow and will ensure they are collected and burnt.

If allowed to flower in the late summer, the seeds are ejected several feet from the pods to create further invasions the following year.

■ Did you know that great spotted woodpeckers are major predators of nestlings, especially blue-tits?

A neighbour watched in horror as a 'pecker hammered a hole in a nesting box containing fledgling blue-tits and, in seconds, pulled out a youngster and flew off with it.

I have since discovered that the great spotted woodpecker is notorious for this behaviour and is, indeed, even thought to have contributed to the decline of the lesser spotted woodpecker by killing

its young. Incidentally, while on the subject of predation, a magpie landed on a bird table in my garden, then darted onto a bank under a hedge, flapped and flew off with something in its beak. I investigated and discovered the still wriggling back half of an adult slow worm.

A reader, Alison Tottenham, has also pointed out that the apparent disappearance of blue-tits at this time of the year is simply because they are nesting and rearing young, a task which requires them to feed on protein-rich bugs, food which is hidden by abundant foliage.

The birds are still around but in the high leaf canopy searching for food. She also points out that much of the bird food we buy is very low in water and protein, but high in starches and fat, and although ideal for winter fare is not suitable for the breeding season. Too much fat, she points out, can damage reproductive systems.

Dorset Wildlife Trust's raptorcams have been in action, featuring not only a pair of barn owls and a pair of tawny owls whose three young have now fledged, but also what is believed to be the UK's first online buzzard webcam. Visit [www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/spri](http://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/spri) to watch.

To contact Tony Jackson, write to: Country Scene, South Street, Axminster, Devon EX13 5AD or by email to: [wardjackson@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:wardjackson@tiscali.co.uk)

*The views expressed are those of the columnist and not necessarily of the newspaper.*

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# BLACKDOWN HILLS MARQUEE at Honiton Show

Thursday 4th August 2011

## Blackdown Hills Marquee will offer an array of exhibits for all ages and interests

**A unique experience in the Blackdown Hills Marquee at the Honiton Show - Thursday, 4th August 2011**

The Blackdown Hills Marquee will offer an array of exhibits and activities giving you a unique experience at the Honiton Show on Thursday, 4th August. The Blackdown Hills Marquee is organised by the Blackdown Hills Business Association.

Every year visitors to our marquee tell us we have "the Best Marquee at the Honiton Show"!

The Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership will provide

information on activities in the area and a flora and fauna advisory service throughout the day as will the Neroche Scheme, Blackdown Hills Woodland Association and Making it Local Programme – a grants programme for communities and businesses in the area.

Alan Bruford of Escot Park and the Blackdown Hills Hedge Association will be running activities to keep the children entertained throughout the day!

Coldharbour Mill will be running demonstrations and will be inviting you to attend Coldharbour Mill self-guided tours around the

extensive Mill and Steam complexes start at £3.50 for adults - with concessions for seniors - £1.75 for children and £9 for a family group of 2 adults and 4 children. This fascinating Mill in the Blackdown Hills has attractive grounds, as well as a shop and The Gill Box Restaurant for a delicious and reasonably priced meal.

Other businesses that will be running demonstrations throughout the day are:

David Ball Furniture Restoration, Val Grainger will be bringing the World's smallest sheep and will demonstrating peg looming. There

will also be demonstrations by Gill Campbell – Master Saddler.

The Blackdown Hills marquee is organised by the Blackdown Hills Business Association. For further details of the activities and benefits of membership, please contact the BHBA at St Ivel House, Station Road, Hemyock, Cullompton, Devon EX15 3SJ. E: info@bhba.org.uk or T: 01823 681484. www.bhba.org.uk. Membership is only £50 per year and

includes listings in two on-line directories, monthly networking meetings, grants information, training events, socials, markets and shows and much more.



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# BLACKDOWN HILLS MARQUEE at Honiton Show

Thursday 4th August 2011

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Please note: This is a free service and whilst we endeavour to include all entries, we cannot guarantee all listings submitted will be published. Please use one form per event.

**WE ARE UNABLE TO TAKE DIARY DATES LISTINGS OR QUERIES OVER THE PHONE**  
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THE Brewhouse Young Company is offering a chance to get exclusive theatre experience both on-stage and backstage in Somerset's leading creative venue, The Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre, Taunton.

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This summer, the company will be taking on the ambitious and now eerily relevant adaptation of George Orwell's 1984. Adapted by Nick Lane, it's a fast paced, edgy script, that makes manifest Orwell's timeless classic in today's troubled times.

Using film and digital imagery to help tell its story, it promises to be a visually packed, multimedia spectacular.

Rehearsals for the production start on Monday, August 8th with performances running from Wednesday, August 24th to Saturday, August 27th.

In order to take part applicants need to be available for the whole of this time.

There is also a membership of £25 which includes a company T-shirt.

To find out more about the show, the company and the roles you can apply for, email [kelly.smith@thebrewhouse.net](mailto:kelly.smith@thebrewhouse.net) to request an application pack.

**Send details of your  
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## Diary dates

#### Every Thursday

**CHARD:** Zumba at The Guildhall, Chard. It's a combination of exciting unique latin moves and rhythms. It gives you a fun-based fitness workout. From 7.30pm until 8.30pm. For more information phone 07738 014409 or email [zumbasom@hotmail.com](mailto:zumbasom@hotmail.com).

**CHARD:** Chard Guildhall Antiques and Collectors Fair from 8 am. Free admission and a thriving fair with a good mix of regular and casual stallholders. Offering a fantastic range of good quality products. New stallholders always welcome. Contact 01460 239567 for more information.

#### Every Tuesday

**CHARD:** Slimming World at The Guildhall, Chard. Morning sessions at 9.30am and 11.30am. Please phone Jenny on 01460 61786. Evening sessions at 5.30pm and 7.30pm. Please phone Charlie on 07790935647.

#### Saturday, July 9th

**CREWKERNE:** Coffee morning in the Unitarian Chapel, Hermitage Street 10am — 11.30am.

**SHELDON:** Church Fete and Fun Dog Show at Westmead Cottage, opposite the church starting at 2pm. For further information contact H Morris 01404 841294.

#### Saturday, July 30th

**ANGERSLEIGH:** Church Fair to be held at the Old Parsonage Orchard, Angersleigh from 2.30pm. For more details telephone Laetitia Grant 01823 421610.

**STOCKLAND:** Country Market takes place at the W1 Quality local produce on sale including meat, vegetables, jams, breads and crafts from 10am — 12 noon. For bookings telephone 01404 881535.

# SERendip

**Sherard Cowper-Coles**  
**Cables from Kabul**  
Britain's Afghan Envoy 2007-2010



*A frank and honest memoir by Britain's former ambassador to Kabul which provides a unique, high-level insight into Western policy in Afghanistan.*

For three years, from 2007 until 2010, Sherard Cowper-Coles was on the diplomatic front-line in Kabul as the Western policy towards Afghanistan sank deeper into crises. First as the British Ambassador and, later, as the Foreign Secretary's Special Representative, he witnessed at first hand a struggle that by 2010 was swallowing billions of pounds of taxpayers' money, and has cost the lives of more than 2,000 American and 350 British soldiers, as well as tens of thousands of Afghans, in and out of uniform.

In 'Cables from Kabul' he gives the reader a ringside seat in the enfolding drama of the West's Afghanistan mission. Packed full of colourful vignettes, the book lifts the lid on Embassy life, while at the same time providing a powerful critique of Western strategy. Why, he asks, are we focused on pacifying the Taliban in order to hand over power to a half-formed Afghan state that is neither willing nor able to govern?

The book sets out Sherard's conviction that the Afghanistan project can be brought to a successful conclusion only if America is prepared to engage directly with its enemies and to deliver the massive political and diplomatic effort required to bring about conflict resolution.

Nobody is better placed to tell this story. Authoritative, witty and astonishingly frank, 'Cables from Kabul' explains how we got into the quagmire of Afghanistan, and how we can get out.

# SERendip

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# Be a BBQ master

If you haven't yet set your outdoor catering equipment free, the onset of July should certainly mark the beginning of your barbecue season.

Are you scrubbing up your old faithful charcoal griller, re-attaching the gas supply to your family-sized barbecue or just stocking up on one-use-only devices?

Guests never forget a decent outdoor eating event, but if your bangers have a tendency to burn, don't over compensate with extra salad - brush up on your sizzling skills instead.

We've rounded up a selection of outdoor equipment to enhance your efforts, with gear so good that you might be forgiven even if your feast isn't quite five-star.



■ **Bugs Busted** - Solar Mosquito Zapper, £10.95 from [www.gizoo.co.uk](http://www.gizoo.co.uk). Nothing irritates more at an outdoor eating event than winged bugs dive-bombing around you as you're trying to tuck in - but help is at hand with this rather stylish solar powered zapping machine.

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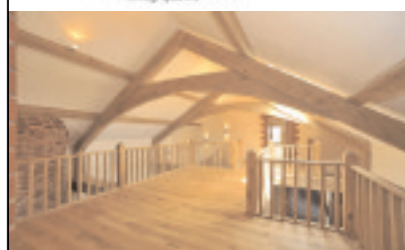
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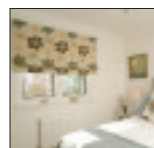
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# Porsche choices



**I**N the world of motoring you can never have too many Porsches to choose from. The German firm has been particularly industrious of late, what with special edition 911s and expanding its Panamera line-up.

Thankfully it's also found time to bolster its Cayman range. For some this coupe is viewed as a mini 911, albeit one from a decade or two ago. Its more focused personality has seen it find favour with drivers seeking a back-to-basics experience but with all the electronic and comfort mod cons of today for good measure.

The Cayman is also a good bit more affordable than a modern day 911, although the gap does narrow somewhat when you start ticking boxes for the various tempting options. However, to view the Cayman solely as a cheaper alternative to the great 911 is to miss the point - it's also a fantastic car in its own right.

This notion has been further reinforced by the introduction of an 'R' model. Following on logically from the not too shabby S model, you could say the R is aimed at the more demanding and appreciative of the Porsche fan club. That might appear to be a very narrow section of buyers, but don't forget that 911 GT3, GT3 RS and GT2 variants boast a considerable following despite their niche market positioning.

Granted, the Cayman R isn't supposed to be a mini-me GT3, but its specification more than hints at the potential for above average thrills - even in the context of an already quick donor car.

What you get for your money - a price tag that's closer to a 911 than you might first think - is something quite special. The Cayman R has lost a little bit of weight and gained a few choice improvements under the skin plus a few extra horsepower.

The Cayman's 3.4-litre flat-six motor now boasts 330 horsepower, which is 10 more than the S. It's already a peach of an engine, and while it's in its element being exercised to the maximum it's also torquey enough to happily trickle through town at low revs.

What makes the Cayman R that bit more special is the detailed suspension tweaks. A slightly lower ride height, camber changes fore and aft plus new anti roll bars, spring and damper modifications and lighter alloy wheels all add

up to deliver a sublime experience for the discerning driver.

Factor in the car's already near-flawless steering and the ability to cover ground at a rapid pace while benefiting from the constant stream of feedback through the car's helm and seat is hard to beat. And considering the cornering forces the car can generate, those seats are reassuringly snug and supportive.

It's true that the ride is a little firmer than a regular Cayman but we're not talking GT3 RS firm here. Despite the lower ride height and various other changes, the Cayman R is still a car that can be confidently used every day. The fabric loop-style door pulls are a nod to the car's weight saving programme, although the deleted audio and climate control units can easily be added to the car's specification if you so wish.

Elsewhere, the performance is pure Cayman S - and then

some. The car's standard-fit six-speed manual gearbox is a short-shifting device that's hard to beat for accuracy and feel. Of course, there's Porsche's optional seven-speed PDK 'box to consider, which adds an extra ratio to boost economy and refinement at motorway speeds. It's also darn quick - quicker than you or I - and allows you to keep both hands on the wheel and utilise the chunky steering wheel paddle shifters.

The Cayman R might be something of a specialist tool but there's no questioning its abilities. Getting the job done, be it a B-road blast or spirited track day experience, is the name of the game, and this particular Cayman delivers thrills in spades. If you know what you're doing the car will surprise and delight, but never scare, in equal measure. A finely tuned machine for everyday use, the Cayman R is hard to beat at any price.

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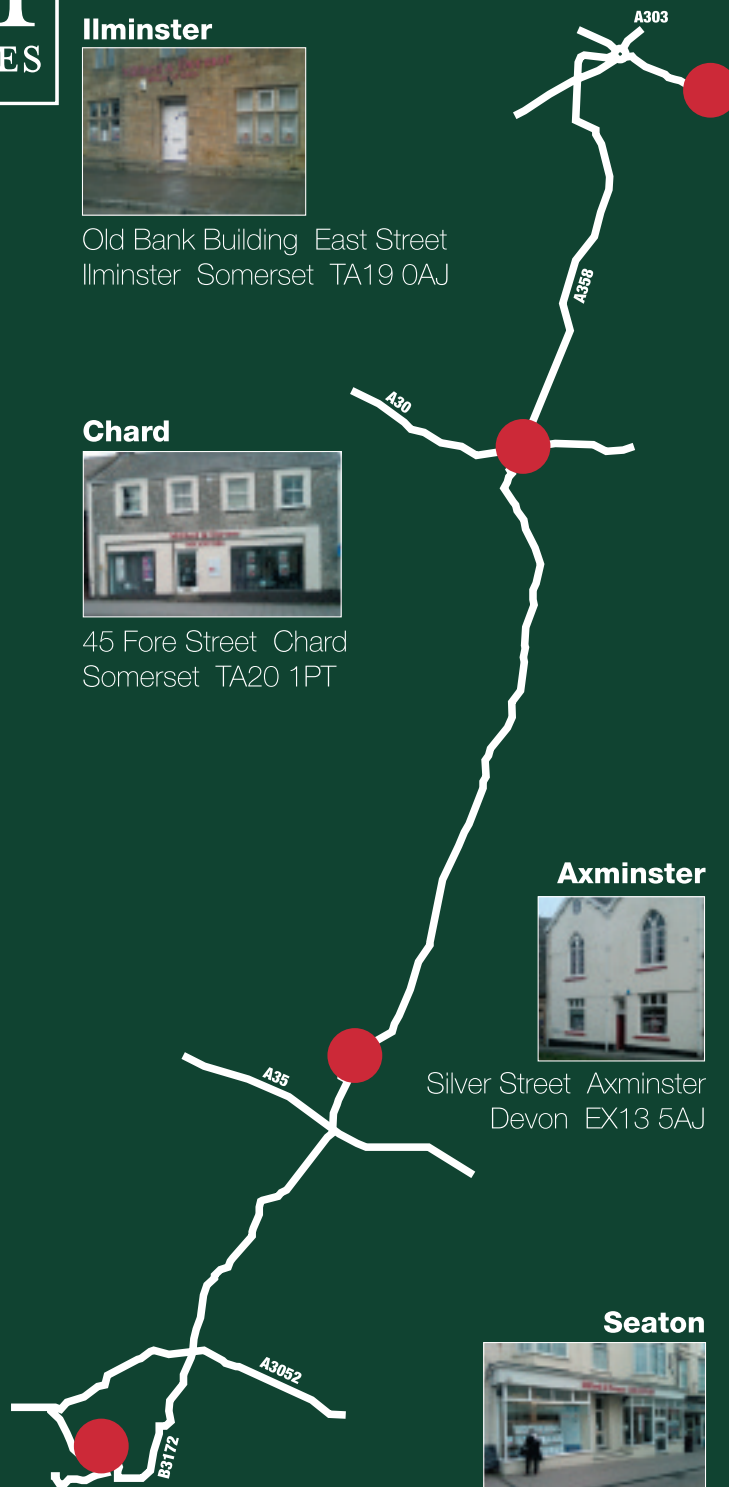


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### WILLAND

A newly renovated house situated in rural position close to popular residential area. Hallway, dining room, kitchen, sitting room, study, 3 double bedrooms, bathroom, gardens, parking, O.F.C.H. Pets/Children Considered, Available Immediately. Tiverton Office 01884 232872

£900 Per calendar month

Ref: 45695



### BUCKLAND ST MARY

Detached fully/part or U/F bungalow. Includes kitchen/breakfast room, dining room, sitting room, study, 3 bedrooms, bathroom, garden & parking. Available August/Sept. Taunton Office 01823 447355

£1,250 Per calendar month

Ref: 37726

## Struggling to sell?

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### MEMBURY

Spacious detached 4 bedrooom U/F farmhouse to let with outbuildings, parking and gardens. Kitchen/breakfast room, sitting room, dining room, 4 double bedrooms (one en-suite shower room), family bathroom, E.N.S.H, double glazed. Honiton Office 01404 42553

£995 Per calendar month

Ref: 34104



### HEMYOCK

A recently refurbished 3 bedroom attached house set in this popular village. Entrance hall, sitting room, dining room, kitchen, utility, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom. Garden and on street parking. O.F.C.H. Taunton Office 01823 447355

£695 Per calendar month

Ref: 46319



### HEMYOCK

A well presented nearly new 2 bedroom U/F semi detached house in popular village location. Entrance hall, cloakroom, kitchen, sitting room, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom, courtyard garden, parking, O.F.C.H. Taunton Office 01823 447355

£595 Per calendar month

Ref: 43048



### ASHBRITTLE

4 bed semi detached U/F house in the centre of this quiet village overlooking the village green. OFCH, garage, workshop, large garden with greenhouse, small orchard. Pets & children considered, Tiverton Office 01884 232872

£900 Per calendar month

Ref: 33501



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## NR DUNKESWELL

A spacious and characterful refurbished cottage in a beautiful, private location. Sitting room, kitchen/breakfast room with Aga, study/bedroom 4, utility, 3 bedrooms, e/s & bathroom. Approx 2 acres glorious grounds with ponds and formal gardens. Outbuildings. Ref: 46258

Guide price £579,950

Honiton 01404 45885



## BODMISCOMBE

A most attractive Victorian farmhouse in a delightful rural hamlet. 2 Reception rooms. Kitchen/breakfast room. Garden room. Laundry room. Shower room. 3 double bedrooms. Family bathroom. Covered courtyard/utility area. Gardens & parking. Ref: 36965

Guide price £315,000

Honiton 01404 45885



## CLAYHIDON

A well appointed four bedroom double fronted village house set within a small development of five individual properties set within the Blackdown Hills, designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Ref: 43741

Guide price £250,000

Wellington 01823 662822



## CLAYHIDON

A unique three bedroom semi detached barn conversion occupying a superb semi rural location and enjoying views to the countryside. Ref: 42508

Guide price £325,000

Wellington 01823 662822



## CULMSTOCK

A charming three bedroom semi detached Grade II Listed cottage requiring some updating and suitable for dual occupancy. For Sale by Public Auction on 12th July 2011. Ref: 46343

For auction £150,000 to

Wellington 01823 662822



## SMEATHARPE

An attractive detached period cottage with immense potential for improvement/extension. Sitting room. Dining room. Kitchen. Utility. Ground floor bathroom. Three first floor bedrooms. Good sized gardens. Parking. Garage/workshop. Ref: 43665

Guide price £200,000

Honiton 01404 45885

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